BATMAN.
BLACK
and
WHITE
4
$2.95 US
$4.25 CAN
SEP 96

For Neal Pozner
Who knew not everything was black and white

Cover by Alex Toth

Inside front cover by Alex Ross

An Innocent Guy

Written and illustrated by Brian Bolland
Lettered by Ellie DeVille

Monsters In The Closet

Written by Jan Strnad
Illustrated by Kevin Nowlan

Heroes

Written by Archie Goodwin
Illustrated by Gray Morrow
Lettered by Todd Klein

Leadenwing

Written by Dennis O'Neil
Illustrated by Brian Stelfreeze
Lettered by John Costanza

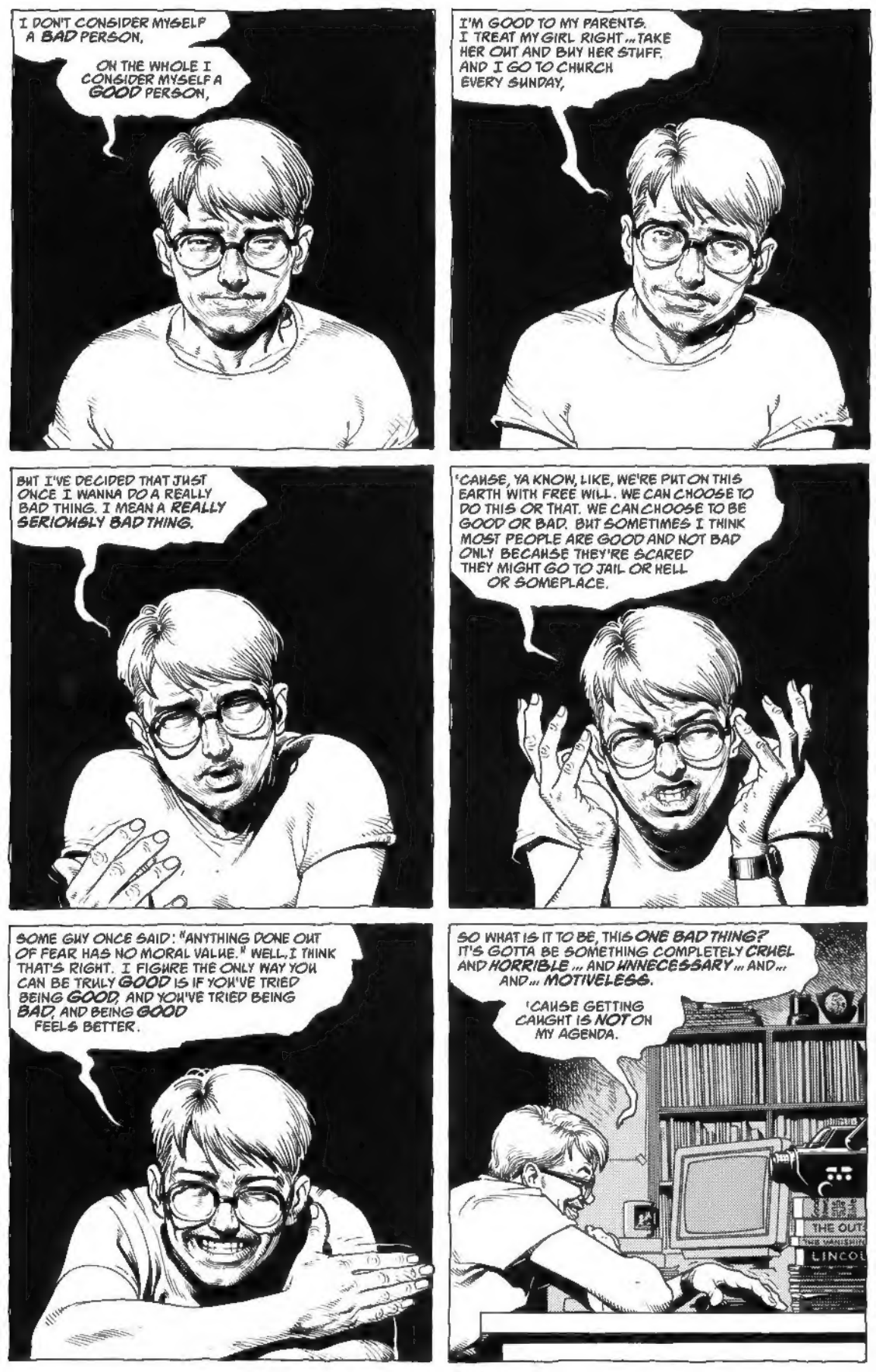
The Third Wish

Written and illustrated by Katsuhiro Otomo
Translated by Jo Duffy
Lettered by Bill Oakley

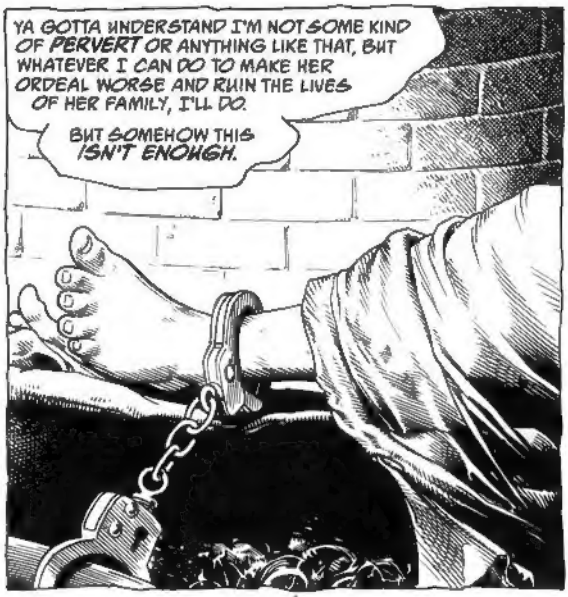
Inside back cover by Neal Adams

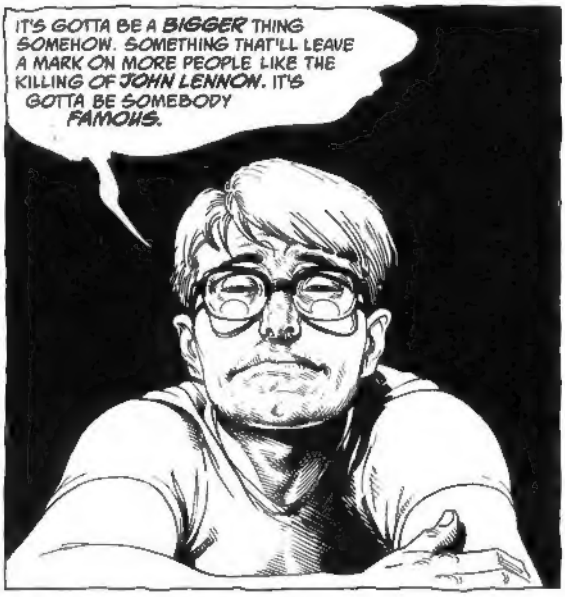
JENETTE KAHN President & Editor-in-Chief
PAUL LEVITZ Executive VP & Publisher
DENNIS O'NEIL Group Editor
MARK CHIARELLO & SCOTT PETERSON Editors
DARREN VINCENZO Associate Editor
ROBBIN BROSTERMAN Art Director
BRUCE BRISTOW VP-Sales & Marketing
RICHARD BRUNING VP-Creative Director
PATRICK CALDON VP-Finance & Operations
TERRI CUNNINGHAM Managing Editor
CHANTAL d'AULNIS VP-Licensed Publishing
JOEL EHRLICH Senior VP-Advertising & Promotions
LILLIAN LASERSON VP & General Counsel
BOB ROZAKIS Executive Director-Production

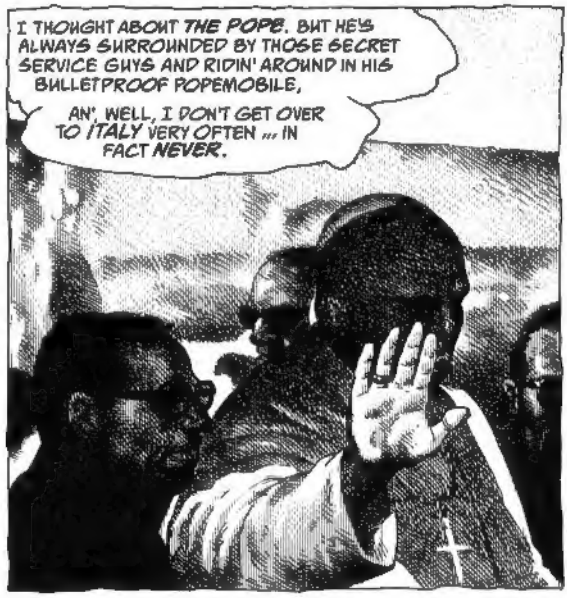
BATMAN BLACK AND WHITE 4 September 1996. Published by and copyright © 1996 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. Batman and all related characters, the distinctive likenesses thereof and all related indicia are trademarks of DC Comics. The stories, characters and incidents featured in this publication are entirely fictional. DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. A division of Warner Bros. - A Time Warner Entertainment Company.
Publication design by Eddie Ortiz.
Printed in Canada.


I DON'T CONSIDER MYSELF A BAD PERSON,
ON THE WHOLE I CONSIDER MYSELF A GOOD PERSON,
I'M GOOD TO MY PARENTS. I TREAT MY GIRL RIGHT ... TAKE HER OUT AND BUY HER STUFF. AND I GO TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY,
BUT I'VE DECIDED THAT JUST ONCE I WANNA DO A REALLY BAD THING. I MEAN A REALLY SERIOUSLY BAD THING.
'CAUSE, YA KNOW, LIKE, WE'RE PUT ON THIS EARTH WITH FREE WILL. WE CAN CHOOSE TO DO THIS OR THAT. WE CAN CHOOSE TO BE GOOD OR BAD. BUT SOMETIMES I THINK MOST PEOPLE ARE GOOD AND NOT BAD ONLY BECAUSE THEY'RE SCARED THEY MIGHT GO TO JAIL OR HELL OR SOMEPLACE.
SOME GUY ONCE SAID: "ANYTHING DONE OUT OF FEAR HAS NO MORAL VALUE." WELL, I THINK THAT'S RIGHT. I FIGURE THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN BE TRULY GOOD IS IF YOU'VE TRIED BEING GOOD, AND YOU'VE TRIED BEING BAD, AND BEING GOOD FEELS BETTER.
SO WHAT IS IT TO BE, THIS ONE BAD THING? IT'S GOTTA BE SOMETHING COMPLETELY CRUEL AND HORRIBLE ... AND UNNECESSARY ... AND ... AND ... MOTIVELESS.
'CAUSE GETTING CAUGHT IS NOT ON MY AGENDA.

THERE'S AN OLD DISUSED SEWER SHAFT OUT IN A PLACE I KNOW WHERE NO ONE EVER GOES.
I THOUGHT I'D KIDNAP A LITTLE GIRL AND CHAIN HER UP DOWN THERE AND LEAVE HER THERE WEEPING AND WAILING IN THE DARK TILL SHE STARVED TO DEATH.
23C


YA GOTTA UNDERSTAND I'M NOT SOME KIND OF PERVERT OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT, BUT WHATEVER I CAN DO TO MAKE HER ORDEAL WORSE AND RUIN THE LIVES OF HER FAMILY, I'LL DO.
BUT SOMEHOW THIS ISN'T ENOUGH.


IT'S GOTTA BE A BIGGER THING SOMEHOW. SOMETHING THAT'LL LEAVE A MARK ON MORE PEOPLE LIKE THE KILLING OF JOHN LENNON. IT'S GOTTA BE SOMEBODY FAMOUS.


I THOUGHT ABOUT THE POPE. BUT HE'S ALWAYS SURROUNDED BY THOSE SECRET SERVICE GUYS AND RIDIN' AROUND IN HIS BULLETPROOF POPEMOBILE,
AN', WELL, I DON'T GET OVER TO ITALY VERY OFTEN ... IN FACT NEVER.

I'VE GOTTA CHOOSE MY VICTIM FOR THE SAKE OF CONVENIENCE. IT'S GOTTA BE SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T HAVE AN ARMED GUARD. SOMEONE RIGHT HERE IN GOTHAM.
IT'S GOTTA BE THE BATMAN.

I'LL BE NO PROBLEM. I GOTTA GUN. MY DAD GAVE IT TO ME. HE'S GOT A WHOLE COLLECTION. HE'S A GREAT BELIEVER IN A CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS. IT'S A GUN LIKE A MILLION OTHERS IN THIS CITY.
I'LL DO THE DEED... MY DAD TAUGHT ME HOW TO SHOOT, TOO... THEN I'LL LEAVE THE SCENE. I WON'T LEAVE A CALLING CARD, A DOUBLE-HEADED COIN, A CODED RIDDLE, AND I WON'T LAUGH LIKE A MADMAN. I'LL JUST LEAVE WITHOUT A TRACE.
THE OUT
THE VANISH
LINCOL
I MEAN, FOR ALL I KNOW, RIGHT NOW HE COULD BE IN HIS SECRET HIDEOUT SOMEWHERE HUNCHED OVER HIS SECRET SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM MONITORING EVERYTHING I RECORD ON THIS TAPE,
BUT I'M SURE HE ISN'T. 'CAUSE HE'S ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS AND SPYIN' ON INNOCENT PEOPLE WOULD BE WRONG.
NO. RIGHT NOW HE'S ON THE TRAIL OF SOME CRIMINAL...

HIS GREAT BAT-WINGS UNFURLED AGAINST THE NIGHT SKY...
STRIKING TERROR INTO THE HEARTS OF THE GUILTY,
AN INSPIRATION AND A COMFORT TO THE INNOCENT.
HE'LL BE SADLY MISSED.
ESPECIALLY BY ME.
ONE DAY HE'LL BE FACE TO FACE WITH TWO-FACE...
OR HE'LL BE TANGLING WITH POISON IVY...
OR IN THE LAIR OF... THOSE THREE GUYS WITH ANIMAL MASKS WHOSE NAMES I CAN NEVER REMEMBER!

AT LAST THE VILLAIN WILL KNOW THE GAME'S UP.
THROW DOWN YOHR BROLLY, PENGHIN.
AWWWWK!
MAKE ME!
THERE'LL BE A FIGHT. AND A THRILLING CHASE INVOLVING AN ENORMOUS TYPEWRITER OR SOMETHING,
A SWIFT AND DECISIVE CLIMAX.

THE GOOD GUY'LL MAKE A DRAMATIC EXIT
LEAVING THE BAD GUY TO PONDER THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS.
'CAUSE, LET'S FACE IT, CRIME DOESN'T PAY.

AND JUST FOR ONE MOMENT THE BATMAN WILL PAUSE. TURN. HIS FACE ILLUMINATED BY A SINGLE LIGHT... A SPLENDID AVENGER OF THE NIGHT.
AND THEN FROM A DARK ALLEY,
OR A WINDOW HIGH UP,
OR A GRASSY KNOLL,
OR SOME OTHER PLACE,
THERE'LL BE A GLINT,
AND THEN
BANG

AND HE'LL BE DEAD.
YES, I SHALL MISS HIM ALL RIGHT
I DON'T MEAN, I WON'T HIT HIM. NO, THE BULLET'LL FIND ITS MARK ALL RIGHT
BUT, AS I SAID BEFORE I'LL MISS HIM.
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN HIS GREATEST FAN.
I'M ALSO HIS GREATEST ENEMY.
BEFORE ANYONE FINDS HIM LYING THERE I'LL BE LONG GONE. I'LL DESTROY THIS TAPE I WON'T HAVE A MOTIVE I WON'T LEAVE A CLUE. I'M JUST AN INNOCENT GUY.
THEN I THINK I'LL FINISH MY COLLEGE EDUCATION MARRY MY GIRLFRIEND AND HAVE A COUPLE OF KIDS. A BOY AND A GIRL WOULD BE NICE. LIVE A GOOD AND BLAMELESS LIFE, AND GO TO HEAVEN WHEN I DIE.

"AN INNOCENT GUY"

BRIAN BOLLAND

From his very first professional work, it was clear that Brian Bolland was destined to be one of the all-time greats. Making his debut back in the mid-70's with *Pssssst!*, a collaboration with Dave Gibbons, Bolland instantly showed his incredible command of anatomy and perspective, as well as the razor-sharp linework that has been his trademark.

Bolland then drew British newspaper strips with Sid Jordan before moving on to *2000 A.D.*, where he would produce some of the most astonishing artwork seen in comics. Much of his most notable work there was on *Judge Dredd*, where he drew the first appearances of both Judge Death and Judge Anderson. Brian's first major American work was the miniseries Camelot 3000, an epic updating of the classic tale. He then took two years to draw Batman: The Killing Joke, often acclaimed as the single greatest Batman story ever.

Since then, Bolland has chosen to work primarily on covers, contributing astonishing artwork to the books of several series, most notably Animal Man and Wonder Woman.

"MONSTERS IN THE CLOSET"

KEVIN NOWLAN

Kevin Nowlan is considered one of the most underrated artists in the comics world. He is easily one of the most versatile artists working in the business today. His talents have come with a wonderful knowledge of comic book history and a sense of humor in his artwork.

JAN STRNAD

Best known to the comics world for his collaborations with comics legend Richard Corben, writer Jan Strnad spends much of his time now writing for television.

Jan has written for an incredible array of comics publishers, including: mainstream, independent and underground companies.

MONSTERS
IN THE CLOSET
BE CAREFUL, MARTHA.
HURRY. THESE BIG CITY STREETS AREN'T SAFE AFTER DARK.
"Friend, you don't know the half of it."

"You can't conceive the ABOMINATIONS that inhabit Gotham's secret places--"
"--that lurk behind dark windows and decaying walls--"
"--that emerge under cover of night to feed on the unsuspecting!"
The Gotham Gaz
Langdale heiress missing
"Bio-residue. Pieces of muscle, skin, internal organs. Stinks."
"Still alive."
LANGDALE-BUIL
"Building could collapse with a touch. Dangerous--"
CONDEMNED
"In more ways than one?"

"Worse than I'd imagined!"
CHECK'S IN THE MAIL..
"Words fail me. But he knows what I'm thinking."
YOU'VE GOT NOTHING ON ME.
I HAVE A GRANT.
"If this waste of life disappeared off the pier, would anyone know?"
LOOK. LOOK WHAT I GREW--!
.'TS A LITTLE BAT-MAN!

YOU'RE SICK!
YOU'VE CREATED THINGS THAT HAVE NO PLACE IN TH.S WORLD!
BUT 'VE BROKEN NO LAW.
THEY'RE EVEN PAYING ME TO RELOCATE.
I TH NK YOU'D BETTER LEAVE.
"Then I see it..."
"Water from someplace hidden. A secret place."
GET OUT OF HERE!
LEAVE OR 'LL CALL THE POLICE!
"Secret catch here somewhere...."
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT!
GET OUT!
GET OUT!
CLICK
RUMMBLE...

"Hideous hybrids... creations of a mad maker... swimming and slithering in an aquatic DANSE MACABRE!"
"Abominable assemblies of man, woman and beast!"
"Biological affronts to all that is HOLY, all that is SANE. MONSTERS!"
"A silent plea..."

CLICK CHUCK...
KA-BOOM
"Forgot the little man!"

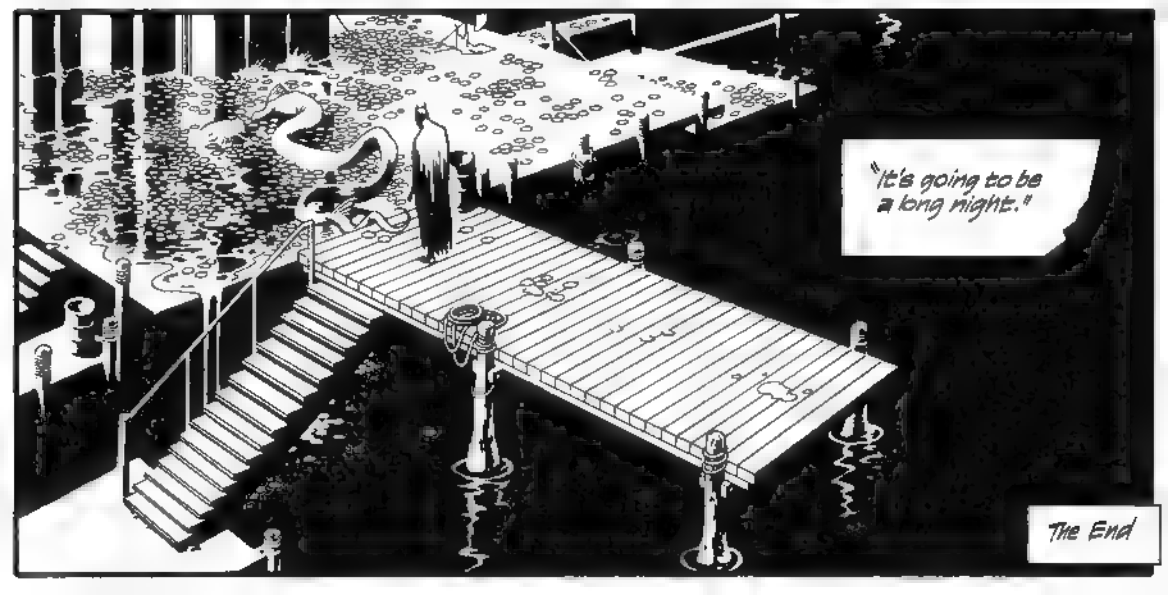
"Screams all around. Madness-inducing cries... inhuman."
"Two screams. One from the creature. Another one behind me. The little man...!"
"Never reach him in time... even if I wanted to."
NO!
MERCY!

"No mercy."

"Then there's THESE things. Must be thousands of them."

"Some fell in the harbor. They may live, even in THESE waters."

KR-SPLUT


"It's going to be a long night."
The End

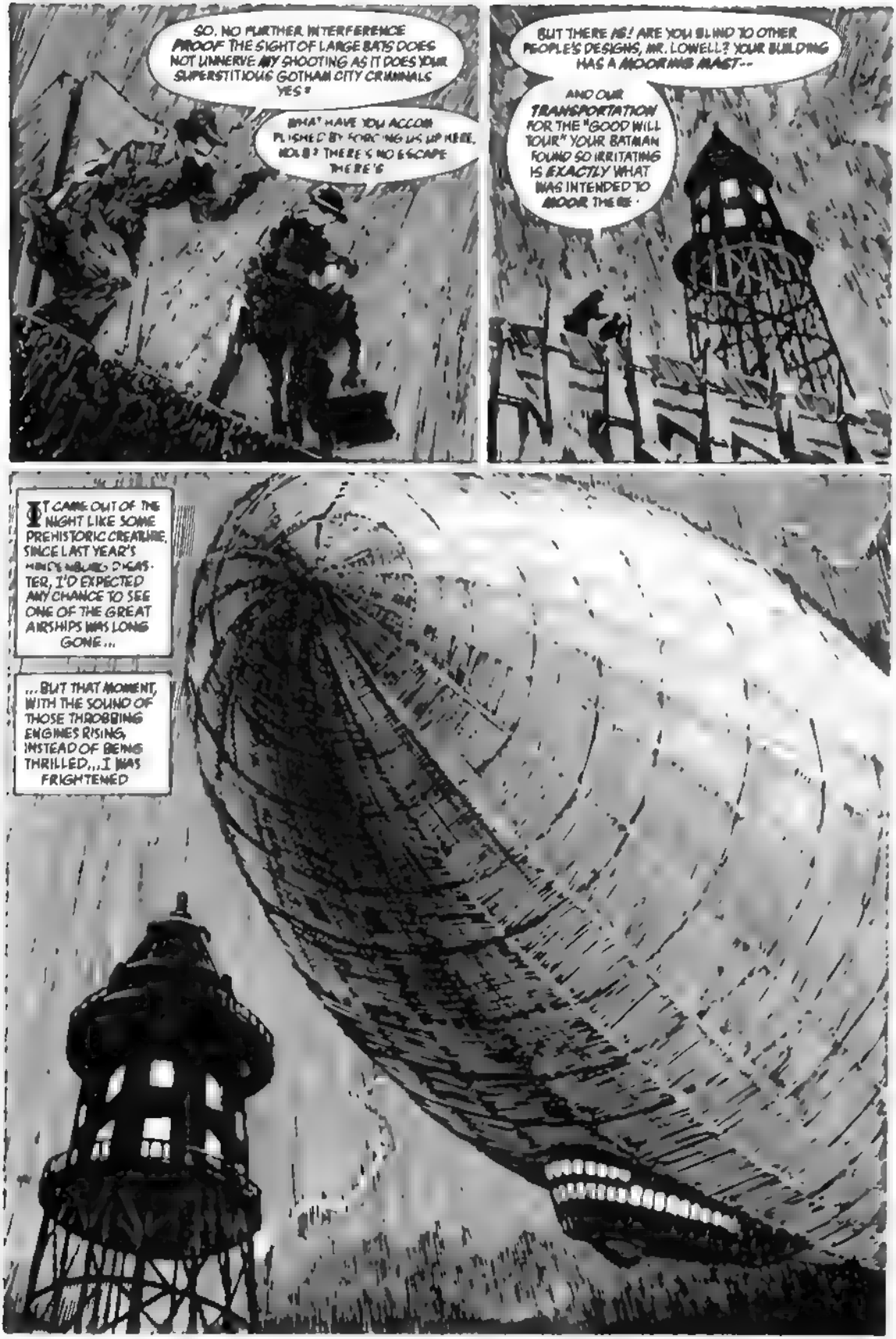
THAT YEAR, WHEN I WAS TEN YEARS OLD, I DIDN'T WANT FOR HEROES.
IN THE FUNNY PAPERS THERE WAS PAT RYAN OF "TERRY AND THE PIRATES"...
...WITH AN UPPERCUT AND WISECRACK FOR EVERY BAD GUY
AT THE MOVIES THERE WAS ERROL FLYNN AS ROBIN HOOD...
...READY WITH BOW AND SWORD FOR THE WORST THE SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM COULD OFFER
IN SPORTS THERE WAS HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION JOE LOUIS...
...WINNING A FIRST ROUND VICTORY OVER MAX SCHMELLING AND DEFEATING SOME HITLER SUPPORTERS' NOTIONS OF ARYAN SUPERIORITY AS WELL.

AND IN GOTHAM CITY--MY CITY--THERE WAS A NEW AND MYSTERIOUS FIGURE WHO MIGHT HAVE COMBINED A BIT OF THE BEST OF THEM...
...THE BATMAN, TAKING BACK THE NIGHT FROM THE EVILS HIDDEN WITHIN ITS SHADOWS
HEROES
THEN THERE WAS MY FATHER, NORMAN LOWELL. BRILLIANT INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER, THE BOOKS SAID. KIND OF A CRACKPOT, THEY SAID ON THE STREET.
MY FATHER. ABSORBED. OBSESSED. MIND ALWAYS AT HIS DRAWING BOARD EVEN IF HE WASN'T. BAD WHEN MY MOTHER WAS ALIVE. WORSE SINCE HER DEATH TWO YEARS EARLIER.
DAD...? CAN'T WE GO YET...?
DAD?

IN A MINUTE, ROBBIE
DAD, THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID AN HOUR AGO. DO YOU KNOW HOW BORING IT GETS JUST STARING OUT THIS WINDOW?
COULDN'T YOU DESIGN A RADIO FOR YOUR OFFICE? WE MUST BE THE ONLY PEOPLE IN AMERICA NOT LISTENING TO "AMOS 'N' ANDY" RIGHT NOW
NOISE IS DISTRACTING, ROBBIE.
I'LL BE JUST ANOTHER MINUTE
DAD! DAD! YOU WON'T BELIEVE WHAT I--
PARDON THE INTERRUPTION, YOUNG MAN
I KNEW SOME-ONE OF YOUR FATHER'S DEDICATION WOULD KEEP LATE HOURS..
--I TAKE ADVANTAGE TO CONCLUDE SOME BUSINESS

YOU'RE... YOU'RE KOLB. YOU WERE HERE EARLIER WITH THE GERMAN TOUR GROUP THE DESIGN COUNCIL SENT OVER. I TOLD YOU I WASN'T INTERESTED IN YOUR BUSINESS
I AM A MILITARY MAN. IT BREEDS A CERTAIN RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT DEFEAT
SO. TO BE THE SON OF A NORMAN LOWELL... DIFFICULT, YES? BOYS DREAM OF HEROES, ADVENTURE. NOT OF WAITING WHILE DESIGNS ARE DRAWN.
BUT WHAT DESIGNS...! TOO ADVANCED, TOO FANTASTIC, OFTEN UNACCEPTED IN THIS COUNTRY, BUT IN A NATION OF VISION LIKE MY HOMELAND...
ARE YOU REALLY A SOLDIER?
AIRMAN, ACTUALLY... WHEN NOT ON SPECIAL ERRANDS LIKE TONIGHT A FLIGHT ACROSS THE OCEAN... DOES THAT SOUND LIKE A GOOD ADVENTURE? THAT'S WHAT YOUR FATHER'S TURNING DOWN... AND MUCH MORE
LEAVE THE BOY OUT OF THIS, KOLB--
NO. HE IS NOW PART OF OUR NEGOTIATIONS SO WE WILL FILL THIS BRIEFCASE WITH YOUR SECRET DESIGNS, THOSE YOU SHARE WITH NO ONE--
--THEN JOURNEY TO WHERE YOUR GENIUS WILL BE PUT TO PROPER USE AND YOUR BORED LITTLE SON CAN HAVE HEROES OF THE REICH TO ADMIRE
DAD OBEYED WITHOUT PROTEST I TRIED TO THINK WHAT PAT RYAN WOULD DO... AND COULDN'T WHEN KOLB GAVE ME THE CASE TO CARRY, I ACCEPTED IT AS MEEKLY AS MY FATHER.
NO. NOT TOWARD THE ELEVATOR WE WILL TAKE THE FIRESTAIRS... TO THE ROOF
OUR DIPLOMATS HAVE ALREADY INITIATED PAPERWORK COVERING YOUR SUDDEN SHIFT IN ALLEGIANCES, MR. LOWELL--

--SO THERE WILL BE NO TROUBLESOME INTERNATIONAL INCIDENTS OVER THIS, NO DISTRACTIONS WHILE YOU DREAM UP WONDERS FOR OUR WAR MACHINE
MY WIFE DIED DURING THE FIGHTING IN SPAIN. I... I CAN'T HAVE MY IDEAS IN SERVICE OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION! THAT'S WHY SOME ARE SECRET, THAT'S--
PERHAPS TOO SUBTLE FOR COLONEL KOLB--
--AFTER ALL, HE'S USING A GOOD-WILL TOUR AS COVER FOR KIDNAPPING AND MURDER
YOU KILLED AN ESPIONAGE INFORMANT THIS AFTERNOON, KOLB IT KEPT THE POLICE OFF YOUR TRAIL ...BUT PUT ME ON IT
AND I HAVE SOME 9MM ALLIES TO REMOVE YOU ENTIRELY!
BRAM BRAM BRAM
BRAM BRAM BRAM
EXCEPT FOR THE FADING ECHO OF KOLB'S BARRAGE, THE STAIRWELL WAS EMPTY
YOU... YOU COULDN'T HAVE KILLED HIM...! NOT THE BATMAN...!
IF I DID NOT... A VERY LONG FALL DID.
UP THE STAIRS...FAST, FAST!


SO. NO FURTHER INTERFERENCE PROOF THE SIGHT OF LARGE BATS DOES NOT UNNERVE MY SHOOTING AS IT DOES YOUR SUPERSTITIOUS GOTHAM CITY CRIMINALS YES?
WHAT HAVE YOU ACCOMPLISHED BY FORCING US UP HERE, MR. B? THERE'S NO ESCAPE THERE'S
BUT THERE IS! ARE YOU BLIND TO OTHER PEOPLE'S DESIGNS, MR. LOWELL? YOUR BUILDING HAS A MOORING MAST--
AND OUR TRANSPORTATION FOR THE "GOOD WILL TOUR" YOUR BATMAN FOUND SO IRRITATING IS EXACTLY WHAT WAS INTENDED TO MOOR THERE.
IT CAME OUT OF THE NIGHT LIKE SOME PREHISTORIC CREATURE, SINCE LAST YEAR'S HINDENBURG DISASTER, I'D EXPECTED ANY CHANCE TO SEE ONE OF THE GREAT AIRSHIPS WAS LONG GONE...
...BUT THAT MOMENT, WITH THE SOUND OF THOSE THROBBING ENGINES RISING, INSTEAD OF BEING THRILLED,...I WAS FRIGHTENED

AND AS KOLB HERDED US THROUGH THE FINAL STAGE OF OUR ASCENT ... I KNEW WHY.
WE WERE BEYOND BEING SAVED WHAT HERO COULD REACH US NOW -- EVEN A BATMAN IF HE SURVIVED --
WHAT RESCUE BY MAN OR PLANE COULD KEEP US FROM BEING SHOT OR PLUNGING TO OUR DEATHS?
I CROSS FIRST WITH THE BOY AND THE PLANS, LOWELL. FOLLOW IMMEDIATELY, TRY NOTHING... FOR HIS SAKE.
MY FATHER NODDED NUMBLY. KOLB GRIPPED MY JACKET, SHOVING ME FORWARD
THEN...

THEN THOSE QUESTIONS FEAR MADE ME ASK... SUDDENLY HAD AN ANSWER.
THE REST WAS MOVEMENT, CONFUSION, ISOLATED SOUNDS. LIKE THE CLICKING OF KOLB'S PISTOL ON A CLIP ALREADY EMPTIED...
...AND THE ROAR OF A ROTARY ENGINE ..
...DROWNING WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A LONG, LONG SCREAM
YES, THAT YEAR, WHEN I WAS TEN YEARS OLD, I DIDN'T WANT FOR HEROES
AND IN GOTHAM CITY MY CITY - THERE WAS ONE WHO MIGHT HAVE COMBINED A BIT OF THE BEST OF THEM ..
...AND MAYBE A BIT OF THOSE WHO WEREN'T CONSIDERED HEROES AT ALL
BIZARRO
THE END

"HEROES"

GARY GERANI

Gary Gerani's fantastic backgrounds as the memories of a lifetime have gone. Turning a life from pulpmania masters as the pulp-like Joseph Clement Coll and Frederick Blosh. Gary's approach to [illegible] has so sophisticated as it is realistic.

With this Batman story, Gerani joins DC's classic Unmasked pulp hero to an already long list of heroes on a pedestal, including The Shadow, Doc Savage and Tarzan.

ARCHIE GOODWIN

Best known as the DC/Marvel writer of the seventies, Archie Goodwin is a multi-talented veteran of the comics field.

He has written many major characters for DC and Marvel, and has written adaptations of books such as *Star Wars* and *Tarzan*, and was the Editor-in-Chief of Marvel Comics.

Goodwin's extensive writing and editing skills on *Creepy*, *Eerie* and *Blazing Combat* are a creative feat that is still held in awe.

He is currently a senior editor here at DC.

"LEAVETAKING"

BRIAN STELFREEZE

Brian Stelfreeze's professional career began in 1988 with *Excess*, a short-lived publication that introduced the comics world to his distinctive style. With its high contrast look and dramatic use of black and white, *Excess* featured his cartoony, Brian is still known as a painter. For the past several years he's concentrated mainly on covers, producing memorable images which often double, including a full year and a half on the color guide for Batman. Shadow of the Bat Stelfreeze is now focusing his attention more on interior art, hoping to explore and develop new directions in storytelling.

DENNIS O'NEIL

For over twenty years, Batman editor and writer Dennis O'Neil has put his mark on the Dark Knight and been the guiding force behind the Batman mythos. He has also proven as a master of the character both as a writer of Batman comics. He prefers to think of himself as simply, "a working professional writer."

Dennis has written most of Marvel's and DC's major characters including *Spider-Man*, *Iron Man*, *Daredevil*, Superman, Wonder Woman, and the Justice League of America. His Green Lantern/Green Arrow series in the early 70's is known as the first "relevant" comic book, and his late 80's title, The Question, is credited with being a forerunner of "Vertigo Verses" comics.

LEAVETAKING
SUDDENLY, A SHADOW DETACHES ITSELF FROM THE NIGHT.
BECOMES SOMETHING SOLID
SOMETHING FRIGHTENING
SOMETHING THAT BRINGS DEATH.

AND BLOOD SPILLS INTO THE GUTTER
BLOOD AND PEARLS.

SOMEONE COMING...
YOU OKAY, MAN?
ROBIN WASN'T EXPECTING TROUBLE, TOOK ME BY SURPRISE...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT, AND--
--I DON'T *WANNA* KNOW WHATEVER THIS IS, IT AIN'T MINE

DON'T LEAVE...
NEED HELP?
WHO... ARE YOU?
SURELY YOU RECOGNIZE ME, MASTER BRUCE!
ALFRED! THANK HEAVEN.
YOU GOT ANYTHING A GUY CAN DRINK, CHUM?
CHEEZ, YOU BEEN SHOT!
HELP...

THIS KINDA TROUBLE I DON'T NEVER NEED
DON T LEAVE
..LEAVE ME TO DIE..
LEAVE MY SON AN ORPHAN .
.AN ORPHAN .
YOU ALWAYS KNEW YOU'D END UP LIKE THIS DIDN T YOU?
COMMISSIONER GORDON . JIM
I'VE BEEN SHOT..

I CAN SEE THAT AND--
--IF I WASN'T OFF IN FIVE MINUTES, MAYBE I'D DO SOMETHING
BUT THE PAPERWORK ON A SHOOTING HUH-UH IT'D TAKE THE REST OF THE FRIGGIN' NIGHT
DON'T LEAVE..

EMERGENC
WASN'T THERE TWO OF 'EM?
YEAH, BUT THE DAME'S ALREADY AT THE MORGUE AND--
EMERGENCY ROOM
--IT LOOKS LIKE HUBBY DEAREST IS 'BOUT READY TO KEEP HER COMPANY. AIN'T HARDLY WORTH TAKIN' HIM INSIDE.
WELL, LET'S GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS.
BRUCE?

DADDY--
TOO LATE, FELLAS THIS ONE'S ALREADY GETTING COLD
DADDY, PLEASE--
--DON'T LEAVE ME--
--ALONE...

THE END

THE THIRD MASK
by
KATSUHIRO OTOMO
translation by
JO DUFFY
lettering by
BILL OAKLEY
RRUMMBLE!
heh ..
.. heh..
..heh .
..heh..
SKUF!
!
GO YOU'RE THE ONE. INCREDIBLE...

HERE'S WHERE THE BODY IS, BATMAN, BURIED UNDER TONS OF RUBBLE
UNLESS THEY FIND A WAY TO GET A BULLDOZER UP TO THE TWELFTH FLOOR, I DOUBT WE'LL EVER DIG IT OUT
YOU KNOW... USUALLY, WITH SERIAL MURDER, WHEN ONE SUSPECT'S COMMITTED EVERY CRIME, THERE'S A COMMON LINK, SOME CONSISTENT M.O...
...BUT THIS ONE... POISONING, STABBING, GUNNING VICTIMS DOWN IN COLD BLOOD. WE WERE SURE THERE MUST BE ACCOMPLICES...
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT INSIDE THAT MAKES YOU...?
A BIG, STRONG MAN LIKE YOU...

...SHOULD UNDERSTAND HOW THE HEART CONTRADICTS ITSELF.
WHAT...?!
THE GIRLIEST GIRL IS RUTHLESS WHEN IT COMES TO KILLING SPIDERS!
THE SURLIEST BRUTE WILL KEEP A LITTLE PUPPY AS A PET!
THUP!
GET THE POINT? DO YOU, SWEETHEART?
NOT EXACTLY
SO MANY VOICES, SO MANY SOULS... BABBLING INSIDE MY HEAD ALL WITHIN ME!
TAP!
POW!

WHOP!
THAK!
KONNG!
BLAST--!
!
WHERE--?!
HOW DID YOU...?
YOUR FACE IS CONCEALED BY THE MASK YOU WEAR, BUT THINK ABOUT IT, BATMAN..
THAT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THE REAL YOU.
WHAT?!
WHY STOP AT TWO? ONCE A PERSONALITY'S BEGUN TO SPLIT... THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS!

:gasp!:
...GONE.
WAIT--!
!

...ONCE A PERSONALITY'S...
...BEGUN TO SPLIT...
...THE POSSI-BILITIES...
...ARE... ENDLESS...
VRRRRMMM!
THERE'S A SHOOT-OUT IN PROGRESS BETWEEN POLICE AND A SUSPECT IN THE SPLIT PERSONALITY SERIAL MURDERS...
...AT THE GOTHAM CITY GAS UTILITY. THE GUNFIRE HAS IGNITED A BLAZE, CREATING DANGER OF AN EXPLOSION AT THE SITE
ALL UNITS RESPOND IMMEDIATELY. REPEAT...

BLAAM!
FWOOOM!
heh, heh, heh, heh, heh, heh...
ARE YOU THERE, BATMAN? CAN YOU SEE ME? DO YOU KNOW HOW I WANT YOU?
UP THERE--!
THERE HE IS!
BUDDA! BUDDA! BUDDA!
DAMN.

heh, heh, ha ...FOOLS!
KZING KZING THUP THUP
SHFF
AHH! THERE YOU ARE, BATMAN!
I'M... NOT BATMAN
END

"THE THIRD MASK"

KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Comic book artist and writer Katsuhiro Otomo is a legend on both sides of the Pacific Ocean. His work transcends mere language barriers on the sheer strength of its creative genius. The phenomenal success of his groundbreaking masterpiece *Akira* sent shock waves throughout the comics and animation world. Although he is now a famous animator, director, writer and designer, to the legions of Otomo fans he will remain simply one of the greatest comic book artists in the history of the medium.

Scott Peterson and I are incredibly proud of this series. We poured our hearts and souls into it and were more than fortunate to work with some of the finest artists and writers on the planet. Of course, there were several other creators that should have been involved, but you can only fit so much genius into four issues. I guess that's what sequels are for.

The truly frustrating thing is considering what this series would have looked like if some of the past masters were still around. An 8-page Jack Kirby Batman story, or one from Wally Wood. Stories from Harvey Kurtzman, Mort Meskin or Burne Hogarth. I can barely even imagine a BATMAN story from Bernie Krigstein. Of course one from Siegel and Shuster would have been awful nice. Ah, well, I guess that's what daydreams are for.

Mark Chiarello

DIRECT SALES
00411
7 61941 20485 7